**COLD DAYS, WARM LIBRARIES**

**Warm welcoming spaces and a host of services in libraries across Devon and Torbay this winter**

Free warm clothes, hygiene banks, community fridges stocked with free food, and hundreds of welcoming groups and events are amongst a wealth of offerings to be found in libraries across Devon and Torbay this winter.

Libraries Unlimited, the charity that runs 54 libraries in the county, is rolling out its Cold Days, Warm Libraries campaign for the third year running. The initiative is aimed at encouraging people into warm, friendly library spaces this Winter not only to help with their fuel bills and the cost of living but to combat isolation.

1.2 million visits were made to the libraries between 1 October 2023 and 31 March 2024 during the campaign.

Libraries Unlimited’s Health and Wellbeing Manager Beth Harris said: “Everyone deserves to feel warm and connected during the colder times of the year, but sadly we know this isn’t always the case. Our libraries across Devon and Torbay will always be a welcome space for people to come in for free, with no obligations and no questions asked. We have comfy chairs, cosy nooks, hot drinks, engaging activities and events, and of course, a whole host of reading materials for the public to enjoy.

Some libraries are welcoming donations of clean, warm coats, clothing, and accessories for their Coat Rails. Anyone can also take an item of clothing for free, no questions asked.

Community fridges and hygiene banks in a number of libraries are also appealing for tins and non-perishable, in-date food, as well as unopened hygiene products. Libraries will also be working with local food waste groups to stock up, supporting recycling and preventing food going to landfill.

**Activities and services across multiple libraries include:**

* Coat rails of donated clothing in Churston, Torquay, Paignton, Newton Abbot, Chudleigh, Tavistock, Totnes, Ivybridge, Barnstaple, Ilfracombe, Bideford, Tiverton, Seaton, Teignmouth, Exmouth, Exeter, Lynton and Clyst Vale libraries
* Community Fridges/Larders in Tiverton, Seaton, Honiton, Crediton and Tavistock libraries
* Free warm drinks in many libraries
* Hygiene banks offering stocks of donated shampoo, toothpaste, tampons and body wash
* School uniform swaps to help families save money and resources
* Gentle exercise classes aimed at keeping visitors warm and healthy
* Weekly clubs from Lego to knitting - there’s something for everyone

A huge thanks to our supporters, sponsors and partners of whom have helped make this happen, included in those are Ikea, Willmott Dixon, Julian House, Torrington Town and Lands, Honiton Town Council, Devon County Council and our library Friends Groups.

Willmott Dixon have kindly sponsored the weekly breakfast clubs happening at Torquay Library alongside additional coat rails and staff time to help out. Julian House, who run a range of accommodation and support services across the South West, have supported with coat donations for those most in need, aligning with their mission to support people who have been forced to live on the edges of society.

All 54 libraries are open as warm and welcoming spaces. But 37 are also offering further services and activities.

**Participating libraries and offerings include:**

Axminster – warm drinks

Barnstaple – warm drinks, soup/food, coat rail

Bideford – warm drinks, soup/food, coat rail

Bovey Tracy - warm drinks

Brixham – monthly breakfast clubs

Churston – coat rail, warm drinks, biscuits, soups, school uniform swap

Clyst Vale – coat rail

Colyton - warm drinks

Combe Martin – warm drinks, biscuits

Crediton - warm drinks, community fridge

Dawlish – warm drinks, biscuits

Exeter - coat rail

Exmouth – warm drinks, coat rail

Holsworthy – warm drinks

Honiton – warm drinks, community fridge

Ilfracombe – warm drinks and biscuits, hygiene bank, coat rail, Saturday breakfast club for children

Ivybridge - coat rail & *Monday - Lego club for grown ups, Tuesday - Scrabble club, Thursday - Knit and natter, Friday - Book groups / colouring for adults.*

Kingsbridge – coat rail, warm drinks

Kingsteignton - warm drinks, biscuits

Lynton – warm drinks, biscuits, coat rail

Newton Abbot & Chudleigh – coat rail, warm drinks, hygiene bank, soup/other food, school uniform swap, gentle exercise classes for keeping warm and healthy

Northam - warm drinks

Okehampton – warm drinks

Ottery St Mary - warm drinks, snacks

Paignton - warm rail

Princetown – warm drinks

Salcombe – warm drinks

Seaton – coat rail, warm drinks, community fridge

South Molton – warm drinks, hygiene bank

St Thomas – warm drinks

Tavistock – warm drinks, coat rail, hygiene bank, community fridge

Teignmouth – warm drinks, food, coat rail

Tiverton - coat rail, hot drinks, community fridge, cakes (starting in the New Year)

Torquay – coat rail, warm drinks, soup/food, school uniform swap

Torrington – warm drinks, cake

Totnes - coat rail, warm drinks

**About Libraries Unlimited**

Libraries Unlimited is an independent charity established in April 2016.

Libraries Unlimited runs the public library service in Devon and Torbay. Each local library has something for everyone: books and information, eBooks, audiobooks and digital magazines, music, films, computers with access to the Internet, free Wi-Fi and much more.

[Find out more about libraries in Devon and Torbay here](https://discover.librariesunlimited.org.uk/)